

Executive Summary



The Long Island Sound Study released its first comprehensive public report on the health of Long Island Sound in April 2001. *Sound Health 2001* provides an in-depth review of 15 principal environmental indicators of the health of the Sound over the last 10-15 years. The report presents data and trends in such areas as water quality, habitat restoration, toxics and pathogen contamination, as well as the status of important living resources native to the Sound or dependent on its health. An expanded suite of 45 indicators of the health of the Sound is posted on the LISS website.

This 2000 CCMP Implementation Tracking Report should be viewed in concert with *Sound Health 2001* indicators. These reports, when considered as a whole, can provide an overview of the impact of management actions on the health of the Sound, and can help managers to refocus priorities if a desired environmental outcome is not being achieved. These reports are available on the LISS homepage at: <http://www.epa.gov/region01/eco/lis>.

SUMMARY OF 2000 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Nitrogen TMDL Approved

The most significant accomplishment in 2000 was the development of the final Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for nitrogen in Long Island Sound, with EPA approval following in 2001. The states of Connecticut and New York submitted the TMDL in January 2001 and EPA approved it in April 2001. The TMDL allocates responsibility for reducing nitrogen loads among all nitrogen sources.

Nitrogen Loading Continues Downward Trend

In 2000 the total point source nitrogen load to the Sound was estimated at 157,631 lbs/day, a decrease of over 29,000 lbs/day from 1990 levels. New York loadings totalled 109,518 lbs/day; Connecticut loads totalled 48,113 lbs/day. The total nonpoint source (NPS) load nitrogen to LIS was estimated to be about 28,000 tons/yr, about

9,000 tons below the highest load over the last decade in 1991 of 37,000 tons/yr. The LISS plans to revise these estimates using a US Geological Survey report to be released in 2001.

Hypoxia Indicators Lessen

The areal extent and duration of low (< 3mg/l) dissolved oxygen (DO) was less in 2000 than the 14 year average. In 2000 the maximum area of low DO in LIS was estimated at 173 square miles (mi²), with an overall duration of 35 days compared to the 14 year averages of 203 mi² and 56 days.

Continued Progress on Habitat Goals

The states of Connecticut and New York made good overall progress toward the LISS goal of restoring 2000 acres of tidal wetlands and 100 miles of river corridors for anadromous fish access by 2008. Since 1998, Connecticut has restored over 308 acres of tidal wetland habitat, treated or retreated many acres of phragmites-infested habitat, and restored 34.9 miles of river corridor to anadromous fish passage. Since 1998, New York has restored over 65 acres of tidal wetlands in the LIS watershed.

Addressing Toxic Contamination, Pathogens and Floatables

Communities on and around the Sound are continuing watershed management-based approaches to controlling sources of pollution to the Sound, including point and nonpoint sources, CSOs, and land use practices. Many communities have formed watershed management committees or groups that cross local, municipal, or even state jurisdictions, to work together in addressing environmental management problems that have no boundaries.

LIS Research Ongoing

The Management Committee continued to make funding available for the LIS research fund in

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2000. The New York and Connecticut Sea Grant programs contributed \$25,000 each for a total 2000 fund of \$240,000. The LISS selected 3 research projects for funding in 2000, which will study historical environmental trends in the Sound over the past 400 years; investigate the causes of the 1999 lobster mortalities in the Sound; and study various factors that may affect phytoplankton growth in the Sound.

Citizen Action

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) met in March, June, September, and December in 2000, and developed key recommendations to the Policy Committee, especially endorsing the creation of a Long Island Sound Reserve system, as called for in the CCMP. The CAC supported increased Federal funding to match the significant state financial commitments to the Sound -- as noted elsewhere in this report, the *Long Island Sound Restoration Act of 2000* was passed, increasing the appropriations authorization to \$40 million through 2005.

2000 CCMP Tracking Report

Reaching and Educating the Public

The LISS outreach and education programs continued to conduct many meetings, conferences and workshops attended by hundreds of public officials and concerned citizens.

The LISS produced and distributed many thousands of copies of its LIS newsletter, *UPDATE*, as well as fact sheets, publications, and brochures covering timely and critical LIS topics. Many of these documents were posted on the LISS web page: <http://www.epa.gov/region01/eco/lis>. The LISS webpage continued to be one of the most visited pages on the EPA New England Region website, with nearly 60,000 recorded site visits in 2000.

LISS staff continued to: provide LIS displays at annual public events, such as Earth Day and LIS Days in Connecticut and New York; address scores of teachers, educators, school children, groups and classes; issue LIS press releases, make public service announcements, and give radio and press interviews on LIS issues.

